

Castle Reassured by FDA Proposal for New Sunscreen Regulations -- August 28, 2007

Rehoboth Beach, DE -- Today, Delaware Congressman Mike Castle commended the FDA on its proposal to finally develop new regulations covering the ingredients, testing, and labeling of sunscreens that protect against both the sun's UVB rays, which cause sunburn, and the UVA rays that cause tanning but also are associated with more serious and long-term damage, including skin cancer and pre-mature aging. In Delaware alone, nearly 200 people will be diagnosed with melanoma just this year; Rep. Castle says such regulation is long overdue.

"I am pleased that the FDA heard the call across the nation and is finally looking to take steps to improve protection against both of the skin cancer-causing rays -- UVB and UVA. With the proposed regulations, the implementation of a new UVA rating system and a warning label on the dangers of UV exposure appearing on sunscreen bottles, consumer knowledge will greatly increase. It is my hope that we will continue to build on this message with a strong public awareness campaign about the dangers of overexposure to the sun, ways to protect ourselves from harmful rays and maximize the effectiveness of sunscreen," Castle said.

In March, Rep. Castle urged the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to issue a new broad spectrum sunscreen standard to protect all Americans from harmful UVA and UVB rays. And, he is a co-sponsor of legislation to require the FDA to issue comprehensive sunscreen standards that protect against skin cancer and sunburn causing UVA and UVB rays, and that calls for implementing a public awareness campaign on the dangers of overexposure to the sun, ways to better protect oneself, and general education on skin cancer.

FDA's proposed regulation for sunscreen includes:

- A four-star system that would rate the UVA protection provided by sunscreens and identify the protection level as "low," "medium," "high," or "highest;"
- Capping the highest SPF value at 50, unless companies can provide the results of further testing that would support a higher number, implying better protection against UVB; and
- Adding a requirement that sunscreen makers assess UVA protection in the laboratory and on people as well if they want to make any claim that their products protect against those rays, whose damage is rarely immediately apparent.

For more information,
visit: <http://www.fda.gov/cder/drug/infopage/sunscreen/default.htm>.

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A Copy of Rep. Castle's Letter is pasted below

March 2, 2007

Andrew von
Eschenbach

Commissioner

Food and Drug
Administration

Dear Commissioner
von Eschenbach,

I am writing to
express my strong support for the Food and Drug
Administration to issue a comprehensive sunscreen monograph standard that
provides Americans with optimum protection against skin cancer. As you know,
rising skin cancer rates pose a growing threat to the American public, and my
constituents have made me particularly aware and concerned about this
issue.

Currently, FDA only
requires sunscreens to provide protection against UVB radiation; the portion of
the UV spectrum that causes sunburn and contributes to incidence of skin
cancer. However, no specific FDA requirements exist for protection
against UVA radiation; the harmful rays that dermatologists agree are a major
cause of skin cancer and pre-mature aging. I find this extremely
concerning, since many other countries, including the European community, have
adopted strong sunscreen standards that require protection from both UVA and
UVB rays to protect their citizens. As such, I urge you to
harmonize U.S sunscreen standards with those recently adopted by the European
Union, which provide optimum protection against skin cancer.

One American dies every hour from skin cancer, and the aggregate healthcare costs associated with its treatment and detection are among the highest of any form of cancer due to its frequency. Despite these alarming statistics, and a Congressional directive in FY 2006 Agriculture appropriations bill calling for FDA to complete the sunscreen monograph by June 2006, the issue remains unresolved.

Please take the necessary steps to quickly adopt comprehensive sunscreen standards that require 'broad-spectrum' UV protection and specify robust protection standards for both UVA and UVB rays. Broad-spectrum sunscreen standards will help reduce America's risk of skin cancer and curb the health care costs associated with skin cancer.

Thank you for your interest in this matter and I look forward to receiving your response.

Sincerely,

Michael N. Castle

MEMBER OF CONGRESS